

Seed sales seen rising on improved kharif sowing

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Cottonseed sales set to decline 15-20 per cent on lower planting area this season

Ahmedabad, July 28:

Seed demand continues to be a matter of concern for cottonseed suppliers though the South-West monsoon has covered most of the country. However, other leading kharif crops such as hybrid rice, maize and soyabean showed a mixed trend in different growing regions.

“Initial rains during June had given optimism. But now we see cotton area is less compared to last year. We anticipate a drop in cottonseed sales of about 15-20 per cent this kharif season,” said M Ramasami, MD, Rasi Seeds, a leading player in Bt cotton.

Acreage shift

Inspite of the delayed monsoon, farmers are still hopeful about recovery of Bt cotton crop with good yield this season. “There have been acreage shifts to pulses, soyabean, groundnut and other crops from cotton primarily due to subdued prices most of last year. Such adjustment in supplies to match demand is normal in agriculture,” said Subbarao Appemane, Senior Vice-President, Corporate Communication and Regulatory Affairs (Africa & South Asia), Mahyco.

But Cotton Association of India (CAI) President Dhiren Sheth said the year-on-year comparison of kharif cotton sowing was misleading.

“People are getting carried away by comparison of year-on-year sowing data. Considering the sowing of last-to-last year, there is a decline in cotton sowing area this year. This is primarily due to lower prices,” said Sheth.

Delayed monsoon

According to Ministry of Agriculture data, total area covered under kharif sowing stood at 69.38 million hectares as on July 24 against 55 million hectares around same time last year. Cotton area is reported at 9.9 million hectares, against 10.05 million hectares in 2013-14.

The scenario is not rosy for other crops such as hybrid rice, pulses and oilseeds also. According to experts, the delayed monsoon had affected sowing preferences of farmers.

Sales may grow

“There were concerns about lack of rains in July. This resulted in delayed sowing in crops like cotton. Guar sowing is almost over. And the scenario is not very good for maize as well. We believe farmers are still confused due to delay. There won't be much growth in seed demand,” said Ram Kaundinya, Director-General of Association of Biotech Led Enterprises – Agriculture Group (ABLE-AG).

However, the seed industry expects growth in sales this year. It is estimated to be around ₹10,000 crore, and growth is likely to be around 10-15 per cent this year.

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